

## Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Course Introduction

**Cathy :** Welcome to the Social and Economic Aspects of Planning course. I'm Cathy Humphrey from NTC, I'm the training coordinator for Planning/NEPA/ADR.

**Elvin:** And I'm Elvin Clapp, the training coordinator for Recreation and Visitor Services, though I dabble into social science from time to time.

.....So Cathy, why are we providing this course and in this particular learning format?

**Cathy:**

- As you recall, most of our RMPs weren't adequately integrating S+E data & analysis. The NTC developed the classroom course back in 2003 to respond to that need.
- Now as travel budgets shrink, we're converting many of our courses to DL.
- Although the online version of this course is shorter than the original 3-day classroom course, it still provides the necessary tips, tools, techniques, and resources for you and your ID team.
- You now have access to a variety of tools for each step of the RMP and EIS process, with the push of a button.
- You can watch the presentations now, then review them as often as you need as your ID team progresses from scoping through the final RMP/EIS--.
- These tools aren't only for RMPs, they can be used for other broad-, mid-, and fine-scale analyses in which the social and economic setting and impacts have a critical role in the decision.

Elvin, what should the listeners do/think about when taking a course like this via distance learning as compared to a classroom format...

**Elvin:** Watching video clips is different from being in the classroom, but there are several things you can do to get the most out of your learning experience:

- Print the course notebook which contains all PowerPoint slides, websites, articles, etc
- Read the instructor notes at bottom of each page
- Set aside quality time to complete each lesson, when you're at your best
- Use headphones or adjust the sound so as not to disturb others.
- Complete the exercises, pre test and post test.

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Once you complete the post test, your DOI Learn Transcript will be updated.

The course is about 11 hours long – so you'll want to break it into chunks.

**Cathy :** 11 hours is a long time, but as Elvin said, breaking it into chunks really helps. And, it's a great opportunity to hear four national experts in economic and social analysis.

Another thing you might want to try is to share the course material and watch the video clips with your interdisciplinary team and contractors, rather than just sitting at your desk watching it alone.

**Elvin:** I agree! The course is structured around the 9 steps of the BLM planning process. As you can see on the slide, the instructors will briefly describe each planning step, then present social and economic tools, experiences, and collaborative measures that your IDT and contractors can consider.

**Cathy:** Because it's organized that way, it makes it easy to listen to the pieces that you need when you need them.

Let's go over the course objectives now. When you complete this course you should be able to:

- Determine what questions to ask regarding S&E aspects in each step of the planning process.
- Determine how to get and interpret necessary social and economic information, and who can do it, if not you.
- Ensure social and economic aspects are integrated into each planning step, and that they are used to make sound decisions.
- Identify collaboration opportunities while conducting these analyses.

If you'd like to see the goals of the course, they're in the notes section on bottom of page 3.

**Elvin:** This course provides a tool box approach.

- Different techniques can be used to address a variety of planning issues.

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- Not every technique will be used in every RMP, plan amendment, or EIS.
- The instructors will discuss what techniques are most appropriate at which steps in the process.
- It's not the intent to teach you how to use these tools because many of the tools, such as IMPLAN, require additional training and experience to apply them properly.

One of the neat things about this course is that Roy Allen, who's the BLM economist for Wyoming, kicks it off by sharing the Pinedale experience. This is a real life example of the importance of social and economic analysis related to our land use plan decisions. Roy emphasizes the point that there is a need to use a variety of techniques during the planning process.

**Cathy:** We realize you aren't social scientists, like Roy is! We just want the ID Teams—especially the team leads, managers, and core resource specialists—to be aware of the available tools, their strengths & weaknesses. For example, some tools are more appropriate to use in an impact analysis, whereas others are better suited when you're describing the affected environment.

Another thing the instructors talk about is how to consider different scales of analysis. For example ...

- You would use **fine scale** analysis with an allotment mgt plan.
- **Mid scale** analysis would be better on an EA for an comprehensive travel mgmt plan.
- You'd use **broad scale** analysis, like from an Input/output model, for an RMP.
- **National scale** analyses aren't too common. They would be limited to projects with national visibility or international interest—like anything happening near a National Park or potentially affecting the supply of oil or gas.

So, as you can see, this course shouldn't be used just for RMPs; the tools can also apply to EISs and even some EAs.

**Elvin:** Cathy, given your extensive experience in land use planning, why is there an overarching need to conduct social and economic analysis? Can't we build solid RMPs and EISs by doing a good job of traditional resource analysis?

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**Cathy:** No, we can't. If you simply analyze habitats and veg types and water quality, then you don't take into consideration the effects on the people who depend on public lands for their livelihoods.

It's a lot easier to determine whether we're meeting water quality standards, than it is to determine if the users of public lands are more satisfied with their recreation experiences than they were 10 years ago.

It's just as important to determine jobs lost or gained and wages increased or decreased as it is to determine whether the quality of a certain habitat type in an area has improved or declined.

Social and economic considerations are part of the complete picture, and if you don't include them, then you're not painting that complete picture.

And of course, there are the other reasons...

**Elvin:** You mean

- Legal, statutory, and administrative mandates.
- Public is demanding more meaningful analysis.
- We are losing lawsuits and being forced to do our plans over because of the lack of s/e analysis.

The notes section for Slide 6 in your notebook goes into more detail on these mandates.

**Cathy:** I hope we've convinced you why it's critical to conduct objective, rigorous, and defensible social and economic analyses in your planning and NEPA documents.

**Elvin:** Completing this course requires a serious commitment. However, the benefit is that we'll have better, more defensible management decisions that are supported by quality social and economic analysis.

**Cathy:** Elvin & I want to thank you for your time and interest and wish you luck in your relentless pursuit of quality analysis, documentation, and decisions!